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CATHOLIC PORTUGUESE MISSIONS OF ANGOLA

*By Rev. C. J. Rooney, C. S. Sp., recently Procurator General
of the Portuguese Mission of Angola*

Portugal was one of the earliest and has been among the most zealous of Catholic missionary countries. Not only did the Portuguese monarchs plant the Catholic religion wherever their hardy discoverers hoisted their "Quinas," the historic flag, with its sacred emblems of the Redeemer's five wounds, but desirous of embracing the complete ideal of Christian faith, they opened up seas and continents to commerce as the most solid and effectual basis for a universal brotherhood. This lofty conception of religion, on the part of the Portuguese rulers found, happily, a responsive echo in the souls of their loyal subjects. Thus when their national poet, Louis de Camoens, sang of "Those Kings who extended faith and empire far and wide:"

"Dáquelles Reis, que foram dilatando
À Fé, o imperio;"

he sang it equally of the valiant-souled people of Lusitania:

"Que eu canto o peito illustre Lusitano,"

who, by feats of daring, made of their sovereign's dreams triumphant realities, and of their national history, especially from 1418 to 1520, rather an epic poem than a mere chronicle of events.

One evil day, in 1580, a Spanish king succeeded to the throne of Portugal and thus united, unhappily, under one crown the two mighty colonial empires of the sixteenth century. Though Portugal regained her independence sixty years later and drove the Spaniards home to Castile and ousted the Dutch from Rio de Janeiro and from Angola, the task of political reorganization, during that disastrous period of religious strife in Europe, surpassed her strength, and the once renowned Christianity, established and fos-

tered by her in the kingdoms of San Salvador and of Angola, having been entirely neglected under the Philips, lapsed back unsupported to paganism. Joseph Thomson describing the missions of this epoch, writes: "It was a time when missionary zeal rose to a pitch never surpassed: when there was a chain of mission-posts almost around the coast-line and far up the Kongo and the Zambesi."

In 1817 an effort was made in the United States, by the foundation of a benevolent society, to provide territory in Africa for liberated slaves. This having failed a new experiment was tried in 1823, which resulted in the creation of the Republic of Liberia. The coming into existence of this new state awakened in the minds of American Catholics the remembrance of the long-forgotten Portuguese missions. An appeal was made to Gregory XVI who referred the matter to the fathers of the First Council of Baltimore. In 1841 Bishop Kenrick of Philadelphia sent to Africa his vicar-general, the Rev. Edward Barron, in company with two other missionaries, and Rome conferred upon him the title of vicar apostolic of upper Guinea, and, later on, joined to this already vast jurisdiction that of lower Guinea. Bishop Barron, finding himself helpless in face of this gigantic undertaking, appealed for aid to the missionaries of the Holy Ghost, an Order expressly founded in view of foreign mission work, especially in Africa. With these the Libreville mission, in French Gaboon, started in 1844, followed by the Dakar mission in Senegal in 1847. Upon Mgr. Barron's demise the two vicarates were confided to the care of the Holy Ghost Fathers, as also, subsequently, the missions of Angola.

While the impulse given to modern African missions on the West Coast came so opportunely from the United States, another no less important missionary movement began in 1849, on the East Coast, in the wake of Livingstone's discovery of Ngami. This opening of Africa not only appealed to numerous missionary societies and to the zeal of Christian peoples, but also attracted the attention of the chancelleries of Europe that soon began the partition of the dark continent.

Angola is the choicest bit of that mighty belt of territory stretching across the African continent, from the Atlantic to the Indian Oceans and reaching in breadth from the equator to the Tropic of Capricorn. It is estimated at 184,479 square miles with a population of a little over 4,000,000. In a rough way I may describe the province of Angola as lying between mighty rivers. On the north the Kongo; on the east the Kuango, the far off Kassai, and the Zambesi in its course towards the midday sun, till the cataracts of Katima, where the southern boundary, beginning, follows along the banks of the Kubango (going east) and of the Kunene (going west). The western boundary is the sole Atlantic Ocean.

A very interesting and striking orohydrographic information, not to be omitted, is that right in the middle of Angola and all along parallel 12° S. is the drainage area, the great catchment basin of Africa's largest rivers and lakes. From this mammoth watershed come the Kuanza, the Kuango, the Kassai, the Lualaba (that forms Lake Kassali), and the Luapulo or upper Kongo (that forms Lake Moero). All these rivers run northward and are affluents of the great Kongo, save the Kuanza that flows into the Atlantic. From this same regional reservoir Lakes Bangweolo and Nyassa take their origin; and flowing southward from it are the Kunene, that rushes into the Atlantic Ocean; the Kubango and the Kuito of which the outlets have not been yet discovered; and into the Indian Ocean flow the Kuando, the Zambesi, the Kabompo, the Kafue and the Lungue Vungo (these last three being affluents of the Zambesi). A development of this watershed, peculiar to Angola, is found in Uhala Mbulumvulo, a treeless, desert region, a flat plain with sea-like undulating hillocks of sand, upon a level with the high mountain ranges, where the torrential rains of the wet season are imbibed, and in turn form a reservoir that nourishes the innumerable rivers of Angola.

The shore line of Angola from the Kongo to the Kunene is a low lying, unhealthy strip of monotonous sea board without cliff or strand, often marshy but for the most part a barren torrid beach. The early Portuguese traders disregarding

these unfavorable circumstances and knowing full well that the natives, to whom time and distance are matters of no consideration, would flock to their ships for the sake of bartering, established themselves wherever they found landing and loading facilities. And yet, beyond in the hazy distance, running parallel to the ocean are the rocky heights, the pillars of the plateau, that rise in rows, tier upon tier, upheaving into a healthier altitude the extensive table-land of Angola. This plateau may be divided into three zones. The shore zone is some 50 miles wide, and rises gradually to about 1900 feet. Though apparently arid, and unhealthy for the white man, yet it is sufficiently productive to maintain numerous tribes of nomadic natives, with their herds of cattle. The next zone is of the same breadth, but here abundant waters nourish rich pasturages and clumps of woods; even among the high rocks alluvial deposits offer a fertile soil for the plants and crops of temperate climates; wheat, corn and potatoes grow side by side with coffee, cocoa and the banana. These advantages, a greater purity of air, and refreshing breezes, make it possible for the white man to found here his home. Next comes the third zone, the plateau uplifted on piles of huge cliffs from 5500 to 5900 feet above sea-level. As the table-land extends far east across the continent towards the Indian Ocean it very gradually descends and becomes more and more inhospitable and less fit for cultivation. Yet it is from this semi-desert hinterland that the Portuguese rubber market has derived its chief supply. Game of all species and size, flock in the forests and upon the plains. The lion and the elephant are still hunted. Drummond rightly divides Africa into three parts: the north, where men go for health; the south where they go for wealth; and the central part where sport and adventure abound. Birds of great variety and surpassing beauty haunt the groves. The valleys, the glens, the rocky fastnesses display everywhere unexpected and gorgeous specimens of floral beauty. There are plains so thickly strewn with small wild flowers that one fancies he is treading a yielding Persian carpet of multitudinous diversity of color and pattern, and softness of texture. The ordinary temper-

ature of the plateau, according to Father Lecomte, is from 59° to 68° Fahrenheit. It is considered abnormal when the mercury mounts to 77°.

It was toward the latter end of May that I arrived at Mossamedes, to the extreme south of Angola, and resolved to approach the great plan'alto (plateau) by the Kalahari desert and to climb to the high table-land by the Chella, a giant upheaval, 6500 feet of perpendicular rock. Mossamedes, capital of the district of the same name, is situated on a picturesque bay, the residence of a governor and at the very entrance of the desert. From the relative coolness, healthiness and beauty of the spot it has won the suggestive title of the African Cintra. As there was a caravan leaving on the morrow of my arrival I took my seat with the driver of one of the five ponderous wagons, laden with supplies for the various missions of the southern end of Angola. The supplies consisted of clothing, agricultural implements, machinery, tools, books, both religious and scientific and other articles. Our personnel consisted of a few whites, half a dozen boys from one of the missions, and a dozen or more uncivilized blacks who though constantly in touch with civilization preserve their primitive costumes. Each wagon was drawn by ten or twelve yoke of oxen, and a relay of over a hundred of these useful and valuable beasts, were driven by shepherds that followed the caravan, to supply those that from fatigue, heat or drought, might die in the desert during the twelve days it was to take us to get through. From 400 to 600 cattle perish annually in the journey. A railway has since been constructed. The caravan started for the desert at the usual signal; the sharp explosive crack of a big whip, which requires both hands to wield, the handle and lash being each about six feet, but this latter is tipped with crocodile gut and produces a sound like a gun and may be heard a mile away. It is thus useful for announcing the moment of departure, for making the approach of the caravan known, even from afar, to some still distant station or mission, and for helping the strayed to find the caravan, and in this way the helpful crack of the big whip has often saved

from untimely death travelers that had wandered away from their companions.

At 4.30 p.m. halt was called. We were then out of sight of vegetation and civilization, lost in the desolate wilderness amid dunes of sand, the horizon itself a monotonous line of sand mounds, sand about us in hillocks and interminable stretches, sand in all its unproductiveness and pathlessness. The camp was promptly pitched, the wagons forming a classic circle around us; the scrub grass was scraped together for bedding and the fires were lighted. I strayed away, as was my wont, from the bustle of the camp and lost myself most enjoyably amongst the sand hills, for I had longed "to come into those yellow sands," to hearken to "the desert's weeping;" for the evening breeze rustling over the sand produces a prolonged moan:

"That undefined and mingled hum,
Voice of the desert never dumb."

The desert with its soil like fire and its wind a flame, as the Nubian Arabs say, or as Bishop LeRoy has it "Where the sky has no cloud and the earth no shade," appealed to me.

Upon returning to the camp, when night had suddenly fallen, for under the tropics "at one stride comes the dark," I found my Kissongo (African guide) sitting stoically on a rocky ledge that had poked its surface through the sand, surrounded by a number of his fellows, who apparently sympathized with him and were earnestly discussing something to his interest. He had been stung by a black viper and death would follow in a few hours unless a prompt remedy were applied. The general opinion of all and of the Kissongo himself was that an operation should be immediately performed. A medicine-man, one of the black fellows that accompanied the caravan, was busy in a moment honing a small blade with a self-sufficiency that won for him the confidence of all the on-lookers. In an astonishingly off-hand way he approached the man, punctured all around the stung part, then energetically rubbed into the incisions a handful of ordinary gun powder and concluded by com-

placently taking from the nearest fire a lighted brand and applied it deftly to the wound. An instantaneous flame produced a cloud of smoke and a smell of burnt flesh and then all was over. Most satisfactorily the operation had been performed and the deadly progress of snake poisoning arrested. During the ordeal my man never gave, for an instant of time, the slightest sign of suffering. No anaesthetic had been administered, and yet no wince or quiver of his tortured body, no involuntary twitch, no half suppressed groan, no look of pain nor even of relief when all was over, no word of thanks, nothing betrayed what my Kissongo felt. I led him to his supper near a fire; he relished it with undiminished appetite and—nothing more. Thus I was agreeably surprised to find myself, at the very outset of my African experience, right in presence of that very interesting problem, initiation or puberty rites. The primitives seem to have understood, intuitively, that man comes into this world very imperfectly equipped for the battle of life, and that it is indispensably necessary for the soul in its struggle versus physical and mental pain, to prove its superiority. Through some process of reasoning, the primitive has invariably concluded that a man is not a man, that woman is not a woman (therefore unfit to be initiated into the mysteries of their sex) until perfect self-control and endurance is attained. Previous to the period of puberty youth counts as sexless. To pass the threshold of childhood into manhood or womanhood they must give a public and irrecusable proof of endurance under pain, physical and mental, which endurance the primitive considers as essential to the integrity and harmonious completeness of his being. Mr. Hall in his book *Adolescence* and other authors who treat of ethnological subjects abound in vivid descriptions of initiation and puberty rights. These rites are practiced in Angola as well as circumcision, which latter is spreading even amongst tribes that up to lately ignored it. There is apparently nothing of a religious character attached to such practices; they are wholly civic and sanitary. It is during this time that they reveal to youth the secrets of the tribe.

The camp fires burned brightly that night, between

beds that were only a foot apart; they flickered and crackled. The savage cannot sleep without a friendly fire: it keeps off the dampness; it moderates the temperature, which on starry nights when the heavens are clear and the evaporation rapid, the thermometer often falls even to freezing point. A fire is a cheerful companion. The savage also likes gazing upon the glowing embers, and figures to himself lakes and rivers and fishing and hunting. Though he never worries his brain to find out the principles of combustion, nor wonders how it consumes, destroys and alters, yet he finds great comfort in it. A fire keeps off wild beasts; they dare not, it would seem, approach this triumphant discovery by which man demonstrates that he so far over-tops and is specifically separated from all other animals. No lion, elephant or orangoutang ever struck a spark from a flint or rubbed two pieces of dry wood together, till by friction they produced a flame, wherewith to warm the body or cook a meal. The fires of our encampment on that peculiar night, my first in the desert, lent a strangeness to the scene and gave to beasts and men weird new forms. The cattle stared at the blaze with large dreamy eyes, and while they rythmically moved their munching jaws "you heard them chew the fodder sleepily." It was the witching moment for men, of whatsoever color their skins might be, to tell or to listen to the quaint old legends or fantastic folk lore handed down unreflectively and unexplained, things that are true though nobody can tell why they are, real enigmas of the past: enigmas that though strange they may be, all take their origin from our incurable searching after the reasons of things; from the will which is constantly in a state of expectancy of undreamt adventures, and from the adaptability of our nature to higher things, so that even folk lore and fairy stories may have a higher *raison d'être* for man than smoking or chewing gum. Then fairy tales please, as Farrer says, not because they are impossible but because they carry the mind further afield than actual experience does into the realms of the possible. Many were the stories told that night of travelers lost in the desert or killed by lions, and of the white man's grave, wherein his friends had piously laid

him, desecrated by the jackal or the laughing hyena. But the Bantu folk lore alone interested me. A great deal, of course, is insipid and trivial perhaps because our mind fails to see the implied meaning. As the night advanced the men fell asleep while I and a few that were near me, continued to converse till the moon, 'twas 11 o'clock, silently and majestically rose, flooding the lonely desert with her wan but welcome radiance. It suggested the story about the moon which a half civilized man related in his own way.

"There was a time when the sun was young running wildly about the skies. He met the moon and fell in love with her; they married. For a long time they lived happy and had a lot of children, the stars. Alas! the sun and moon quarreled. The moon was frightened. She ran away and hid behind the earth. Their children followed the mother and none of them appear in the sun's presence. He is ever since in hot pursuit of his wife around the earth. She never appears till after he is gone. Two bright little daughters keep watch morning and evening and tell the moon their father's whereabouts." The Mahomedan's theory of the stars is that they are missiles for stoning the devil. The Tahitian's say the sun and moon are the progenitors of the stars. In all folk lore there are stories to explain the origin of the sun and moon and stars but the one I was told that night in the desert is the prettiest I ever heard. I read it since in books. It seems to be a folk legend, of which the radical is ever the same.

After twelve days journeying in the Kalahari desert we arrived at Kapangombe, right in front and in full sight of the marvelous Chella, an upheaval of solid, clean cut perpendicular rock 6500 feet, without a crevice or cranny where wild flowers might grow, but on the top edge of the plateau could be distinguished a giant baobab with its quaint form looking like a weed. As I sat on an adjacent boulder contemplating the wondrous Chella, and seeing my Kissongo pass near I hailed him and asked what he thought of the magnificent sight. His answer was laconic. "Black man see Chella, only Chella." Like our Peter Bell:

“A primrose by a river’s brim
A yellow primrose was to him
And it was nothing more.”

The province of Angola is divided administratively into five districts: in these are to be found the missions of which I am to speak, while the missions in San Salvador do Congo are directed by the missionaries of Sernach. The accompanying diagram gives an idea of the number, development and importance of the missions of Angola.

MISSIONS OF ANGOLA	MISSIONS	PRIESTS	LAY BROTHERS	NUNS	CHRISTIAN VILLAGE	CATECHISTS	INTERNS	
							Boys	Girls
Enclave of Cabinda...	4	13	11	10	14	29	477	285
District of Lunda.....	4	11	8	12	6	36	144	69
District of Benguella..	9	21	16	4	11	40	432	150
District of Huilla.....	7	20	26	7	15	34	228	165
	24	65	61	33	46	139	1281	669

These twenty-four missions, whether central or dependent, have all a similar organization, are developed in the same manner, and have adopted uniform method of evangelization, so that a very perfect idea may be gathered from this diagram notwithstanding the fact that I group them all together for the sake of briefness. They are industrial, educational, and religious centers; they have their workshops, schools, and chapels, their barns, and their infirmaries; they have their Christian villages (which form their natural and most desirable complement); they attend also, each one, to a certain number of the surrounding pagan villages in which there are frequently Christian neophytes; the missions, in some distant parts, have also their outposts and fortifications against marauding tribes, for many a time have they had to suffer from prolonged sieges and armed attacks, and to offer shelter and protection to peaceful inhabitants who established themselves near the mission in view of greater safety. In the central missions special advantages of all kinds are procurable, such as well-supplied libraries, pharmacies, scientific instruments, a printing press

for the publishing of works of missionary interest, and an infirmary where far from civilization many a weary traveler, many an adventurous merchant or intrepid soldier have been cured of African fevers, nursed and brought back to life. Services of equal value, but on a larger scale, have been rendered to the natives during the decimating epidemic of smallpox, and sleeping sickness, and even the cattle, the wealth of Angola, often attacked by plagues of different kinds are saved by the veterinary surgeons of the missions. Near the central mission there is moreover, as a general rule, a convent wherein nuns educate young colored girls destined usually to be teachers and catechists of their own people.

The missions are composed of different categories of persons. First of all there is the missionary priest whose primal obligation is to conduct the church services, the administration of the sacraments, religious instruction and the general direction of the mission. He teaches, besides, the higher literary classes and becomes according to opportunity, physician, druggist, architect, smith, builder, carpenter, cook and infirmarian. A true missionary is ready to delve into even science and to dabble in every trade. Then, once in a while, if time lie heavy on his hands, he uses his leisure to take up his peculiar hobby, the study of some of the Bantu languages, the flora, fauna, or geological study of the region he is in; the study of folk-lore, legends, customs, superstitions and music of the surrounding tribes. I have seen some very complete collections of stones, piles of herbariums, destined to the universities and great museums of Lisbon, Vienna, Paris and Brussels. (Missionaries' names have been given as discoverers, to unknown plants, through the grateful courtesy of the notable botanists who classified the said specimens). I have found files of mission chronicles and records of personal observation on historical, geographical, and ethnical local matter. Meteorological observations are made perseveringly by some of the students when the mission has not self-registering instruments. I noticed in one of these missions a most important work of compilation, the slow and painstaking labors of many upon magic, in which the secrets of the Gangas, the action of the Bantu

secret societies, the description of their ceremonies and the mysteries of the world of spirits as known to their sooth-sayers are consigned.

The priest's activity is by no means circumscribed by the near surroundings of his African home; he must evangelize the man in the bush, the perfect savage. Thus each mission is forever creating new ramifications, embryonic centers that will develop into new schools and chapels and barns and workshops. In the beginning these outposts are visited once a fortnight or monthly according to circumstances. If there be a convenient native hut it serves as school, and on Sundays is transformed into a chapel. If there be no hut convenient the spreading, outstretched enormous branches of the village tree serve the purpose, and is certainly more adapted and more in harmony with the end than were the Irish hedge schools of our grandfathers. Nothing is enforced upon these wild children of the woods: neither instruction nor religion. It is forbidden to baptize, no matter how willing the parents or even the neophyte may be, unless there exists a moral certitude that the baptized will receive in time full religious instruction. The only exception to this law would be the fact of the person being in immediate danger of death.

The second category of missionaries is the lay-brother. He is not a cleric; he has not received orders, but he is a religious, that is, he has made the three vows as adjutant in missionary work. These lay brothers are charged with the elementary instruction, material interests, and teaching of trades and handicrafts. Lord Bacon's theories with regard to plantations or colonization, find in the modern mission their complete realization. "The people wherewith you plant," he writes, "ought to be gardeners, ploughmen, laborers, smiths, carpenters, joiners, fishermen, fowlers, with a few apothecaries, surgeons, cooks and bakers." If you add to this list a few more such as tailors, shoemakers, tanners, veterinary surgeons, sawyers of wood, mechanics, and printers, you will have the help needed in a central mission, and to this help the missions owe their material as well as their spiritual success, since the one is built upon the other,

and it was decreed from the beginning "in the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread." In such centres the young Bantu finds himself from the start of his life in the mission, surrounded by marvellous machinery in the different shops: he loves to watch the blacksmith's forge and hear the bellows roar. Everything appeals to the little savage's imagination, and the lay brother is there to note and develop his pupils' love and aptitude for work.

Another very valuable educational force, employed in the modern mission is the nun. Nuns are groups of Catholic women who live together in community life and are bound by the three vows of religion. In the mission they help to educate and civilize the native children of their own sex. If Lord Bacon classifies plantations amongst ancient primitive and heroical works, and if men merit this last qualification of heroic notwithstanding the immense satisfaction men as a class experience in visiting hitherto unknown lands, and this on account of the spirit of adventure which is in them, truly heroic are the women, to whom generally this spirit of adventure, and the war-like spirit, are lacking, who by nature are conservative and sedentary, whose frailty of organism is the very asset of the beauty they so cherish, and who cannot expect a return of any kind in the teaching of savage girls, which in itself would be a recompense, surely those devoted nuns deserve to be called heroic. Black girls are far less attractive than black boys, and they fail completely to develop the winning charms, the winsome graces and gratitude of their little white sisters in our schools. The idea of asking for woman's coöperation in missionary work comes not only from the fact of their being the best adapted for the uplifting of their own sex, but also because they should share in the spiritual warfare at least, since they, for spiritual matters, possess very rare aptitudes.

The catechists male and female taken from among the most intelligent and best of the pupils are indispensable for the success of missionary work. They have always merited the most serious preoccupation of their teachers, who prepare them scrupulously for their mission of coöperation. This preparation begins in childhood and continues till they have

reached the age of manhood or womanhood, and have given proof of their knowledge of religion and total exemption from superstition and its practices. In some missions the teachers must be married, and then they divide the education of boys and girls between them. The first elementary notions of religion and the usual prayers are taught to the children in their own language, and certainly it is a beautiful thing to hear them praise the Lord each one in his own tongue. We have no difficulty in teaching Christian doctrine to the Bantu child, so true is Tertullian's great aphorism that the soul is naturally Christian, and so true is it that savage children also absorb the great eternal truths as infants milk. Where we do find immense difficulty is in getting the adult savage to observe the Christian law, and in rooting out of his mind superstitions and that irrational fear and dread, by which magic tyrannizes over the soul, and all those vain observances and practices so unworthy of man.

The earlier missionaries, in centuries past, began their work of evangelization by addressing themselves to the adult savage. If the Sobba or king favored the missionary, and especially if he became a convert himself and practiced religion, then there was a rich harvest of conversions, for 'tis natural that men should follow example from on high, though possibly such conversions are not of the choicest. In those days owing to his ignorance of the language, the missionary had necessarily to confide in his catechists who by their falseness, treachery, and ignorance thwarted the efforts made and caused great prejudice to the work. Even the modern missions at their origin counted for success upon the adult savage. It was yet the time of slavery, slave markets existed everywhere, and as a successful agricultural and industrial mission depended upon them and in as much as the freeing of these unfortunates was accomplished by the money furnished by the anti-slavery societies, the missionaries conceived the apparently happy idea that by distributing among them land, instruments, and seed, and by building cabins for the liberated slaves, they would be founding a flourishing religious colony of contented, thriving, laborious and grateful people.

It was a miscalculation. According to what seems to be an innate savage theory, only slaves work. Now if the white man gave him his liberty he in his primitive logic concluded that the white man did not want him to work. The savage idea of liberty is to fish, hunt, eat, drink, be merry, and lie on his back in the sun half the day. Another of his theories is that woman must do the work, cultivate the field, cook and brew for him, simply because she is a woman, and this also in virtue of the tritest of principles, which even savages know and observe, the law of might over right. So the missionaries soon learned that the adult savage was resolved upon living up to his own views. We know that all education has some touch of cruelty to it: it needs a strenuous and constant effort, and this is more than any ignorant adult is willing to do. Give the adult savage priceless liberty, you seek too much when in return you ask him to work, even for himself.

The modern missionary profiting by acquired experience and comprehending more fully the wisdom of the Master's injunction "Suffer little children to come unto me" went earnestly to work, traveled into far distant regions and wherever he saw or heard of a child slave he redeemed it, and filled his school with those henceforward happy, docile beings, not yet initiated into magic rites, with minds free in great part from superstitions, and with wills anxious to learn. With these as they grew up he established his Christian villages. Happily today no markets for the human beast of burden exist and the method now employed to replenish the mission schools is quite different: it is to the children the appeal is made. These little savages go now to school for no other reason than their own free will. Like the birds on the branch they are free: their parents scarcely ever interfere with them: they can go to school or flee it as they will, and often for mere capricious motives they do take to the woods. Yet their attendance on the whole is very regular, their progress consoling, and their conduct really exemplary. Like their fathers they have a hatred for work yet they want to learn the white man's ways, and they persuade themselves that this can be attained without work.

Visiting on one occasion a large mission, and having been informed that the couple of hundred boys sustained by the mission gave satisfaction in classes, but if asked to help in the garden or do any manual labour would instantly take to the bush, I had recourse to the following stratagem. Having remarked how much these boys loved toasted corn and having seen them eat it during their games, and between classes, I thought I would propose to them what a fine thing it would be if they raised a big crop of it for their own use: the Superior I said would willingly grant a piece of land and the hoes and seed could be easily obtained. They liked the idea, took it up immediately, and the next day they were hard at work cultivating the "boy's field." I heard afterwards that they had a fine crop, of which they were proud, and that never afterwards, in that mission, did little boys run and hide in the woods when asked to work. In this same mission I remarked that real progress had been made in the development of character. We missionaries consider this a most essential and indispensable point in the civilization of the primitive. By the pagan puberty rites it is true, some command over oneself is attained. Dr. Tyler writes that the blacks "are in mental as well as in physical ability, in no respect inferior to the whites. They are capable of as high a degree of culture as any people on the face of the globe. They are not only emotional but logical and have retentive memories and can split hairs equal to any Yankee lawyer." All this may be true and yet to make a man something more is needed than an intelligence or retentive memory and logical aptitude, viz: character, and character means strong mindedness and noble mindedness. With regard to this latter attribute the following simple story goes to prove that some germ of it exists in the Bantu soul. One day when visiting the classes at this same central mission I found a boy of some twelve years old outside the class room door weeping bitterly. I inquired from him the cause of so much weeping. "Father, I was scolded." "What a shame," I retorted "for a big boy like you to weep simply because you were scolded. Had you been beaten I could understand." To which came a quick rejoinder "But words, Father, are harder than blows."

When the young natives have finished learning and have arrived at an age to make a home for themselves, they receive all the land necessary for this purpose, the materials for construction, the instruments, seed, etc., which are indispensable. In this way the Christian villages already in existence are augmented and new ones are founded. The missionaries make it clear to their young people from the very beginning of their education, that they as Christians are bound to make a living for themselves, that it cannot be tolerated, in the face of the civilized and working world in an age of commercial activities, that they continue idle and indifferent, though natives of an incalculably rich country, and that they even still sustain their lives, as their ancestors did, by pillage and massacre. The missionaries preach to them, in season and out of season, that the law of labour is of Divine origin, that it is the indispensable bond for the linking of all men together as citizens of the world, and that it must be accepted by the Africans as well as by other nations.

To these cursory notes on the missions of Angola I must add a few of my own personal experiences. When visiting them and spending on the journey from a few days to a week or more, in very remote regions, completely outside the civilizing influences of missions or even military posts, I found myself in real savage land, alone with the savage, living with him his primitive life, often surprising him in the midst of his festivities, arriving in time to be present at the quaint, weird ceremonies and midnight dances of the Gangas, accompanied by the monotonous and lugubre beat of the tam-tam, around the hut of a sick man or woman, or to witness the burial of a Sobba, the burning of a village by a marauding enemy, or be present at the joyful night-long harvest feast. It seemed to me as if I began to understand, much better than if I relied alone upon information from books, and had never left my desk, the black savage's way of looking at things and to understand from his point of view and in his circumstances the peculiarities of his mode of living, and this all the more satisfactorily as I invariably traveled with savages alone. My carriers belonged, as a rule, to far off

tribes who had come from the interior laden with rubber and other marketable stuffs and were returning from the coast. On two occasions my men were exclusively cannibal: young men of from eighteen to twenty-two years, tall, well built warriors, fleet of foot as the gazelle, and with their teeth filed sharp and pointed like cats. They were not, however, ferocious cannibals. When I asked them laughingly one day, as we sat for our midday meal if they wouldn't eat me, they smiled and answered they were too young. Effectively in this tribe the eating of human flesh is reserved as a privilege to the elders and only on solemn occasions as when a new king is enthroned. My cannibals never caused me a moment's apprehension. Neither they nor any other savages ever abandoned me or left my camp at night, or stole. They were perfectly loyal to me, cared for me, and hunted for me when I was sick, followed me when I acted contrary to their unanimous opinion, or exposed myself in places where they said lions, or crocodiles or other beasts abounded. In danger of all sorts and in a few skirmishes with enemies they were most devoted and most docile. However, not of this but of matters directly or indirectly pertaining to religion I have to speak. One morning, after a feverish, sleepless night of heat and bodily discomfort, slung in my hammock from the branch of a tree, I was eagerly awaiting my customary morning cup of coffee. I watched with legitimate interest every movement of my black cook busily preparing the beverage, that would give me renewed strength to pursue the day's journeyings. Now it must be known that I always carried with me in a corner of my provision box a little cup and saucer of ordinary white china, but of inestimable value to me, because of the services it rendered. In it I took my broth, my coffee, and with it I drank water from the muddy stream, or, in time of drought, when the only water to be attained was by scooping a hole with one's hands in the sandy bottom of some Mollola or dried-up river. Though chipped and cracked and long since without a handle my cup and saucer were a comfort to me and I often thought how wisely the ancient kings acted in having a special cup-bearer. The saucer was my only plate. As I followed intently my black

cook's every movement I to my great displeasure saw him slip and let my cup and saucer fall to the ground and break to pieces. Henceforward I had to drink my soup from the ladle, my coffee from the pot and water from the hollow of my hand. My cook realized the damage he had caused me. I saw him collect carefully the shattered fragments. He brought them to me and stretching out his palms he said "Missionary, little cup and saucer dead" and then stared me in the face with a look of agony. His piteousness and the unexpectedness of his expression completely reconciled me to my loss for I found myself thus, all of a sudden, in presence of the animism of the Bantu, if animism it be. What did my man mean to say with his "little cup and saucer dead"? He meant that little cup and saucer were no more, but their rests were there. They were no longer a cup and saucer. That which made them a cup and saucer was gone, their way of being as he usually expresses it, their quiddity as we might call it, was no more, a formless bit of crockery remained but what had been there was gone, it was dead. "Little cup and saucer dead." This conciseness was not due to want of words for the Bantu is exceedingly loquacious and precise. What else is death but the passing away of a determined form and as the cup and saucer had lost their form, they were dead. The savage mind grasps things intuitively. The black from childhood asks no "why." He cares not for the reason of things. Indolence in part and tendency to fatality as in all ignorant people, and a mind that has always lain fallow, may be the causes. His only response to questions of this kind is that very descriptive one given by a black man to a curious inquirer "Who ever saw the other side of the moon." This side suits him. He wants to know no more.

The story of the *Omphunda-iovakaintu* or the Maidens' Knoll. One evening I walked out with a companion to visit the surroundings of a very prosperous mission. The country was most attractive as it presented a peculiarly interesting geological formation. At intervals, not distant from one another, appeared abrupt risings of the ground like islands, masses of stratified rock in perfectly horizontal layers,

crowned with tropical vegetation, lofty palms, trees of great size in tufts, with graceful aloes predominating. The undergrowth was so dense I tried in vain to penetrate it. Birds of great variety and exquisite plumage made these knolls their haunt, and the air was resonant with the hum of insect life. The underbrush afforded covert to smaller wild animals. One of these islands attracted my attention: it was that called the Maidens' Knoll. Now it must be known that in Africa it is customary for young girls on attaining the age of maturity, to celebrate it with great rejoicing. The Bantu virgins instead of doing up their hair and adding a few inches to the skirt length, change their *ovikeka*, or childish headdress into one of elaborate and artistic workmanship, augment their arm and ankle bracelets and other details of their habitual dress. But it was not only in this that consisted the annual feast in honour of the *débutantes* celebrated in a certain village, long ago, near to the Maidens' Knoll in question. The most interesting feature of the programme was that the maidens during the feast should stealthily take to flight, and that the young men come to the age of manhood that year, when the girls' flight was known, should pursue them, carrying light hammocks in which to bring back in triumph, amidst the greetings and the rejoicing of the whole village, the captured damsels. On one occasion, as the story tells us, the girls stole away in flight and were as usual followed in eager chase by the young men, but the maidens, this time, were not to be caught. As they approached the Knoll in question, and could hear the cries and the very panting of their pursuers, fearful of being caught they invoked with such fervor the genius of the spot, that their prayer was heard and they were changed into tree spirits, like Ariel in the tempest, and hid in the trunks of the slender, lily-like, tapering aloe trees with their gaudy flowers hanging in clusters between the thick glossy foliage. Long and vainly the young men sought for them when by chance upon the breaking of a leaf of aloes warm red blood came oozing out and trickled ominously to the ground. That night there was sorrow and wailing in the village. Mothers in despairing desolation shrieked their solemn dirges to the winds,

they moaned their tale of woe to the pale moon in the lonely heavens of the night: it was the Bantu's Coronach! For long years after in this village, on very calm nights, soft silvery, maiden voices were heard singing plaintive melodies, in the direction of the Knoll and even now, says the legend, if an aloe leaf be broken, blood still issues, but if you break a leaf from curiosity, no blood will flow.

This legend with its Dantesque and Virgilian and other analogies is convincing that even in the Bantu breast there lurks a stray streak of real poetry, a curious tribute to the unity of the human family. Here is the passage from the great Italian poet.

“Thereat a little stretching forth my hand,
 From a great wilding gathered I a branch,
 And straight the trunk exclaimed: “Why pluck'st thou me?”
 Then, as the dark blood trickled down its side,
 These words it added: Wherefore tear'st me thus?
 Is there no touch of mercy in thy breast?
 Men once were we that now are rooted here,
 Thy hand might well have spared us, had we been
 The souls of serpents
 Forth from the broken splinter words and blood.”
 (*Dante, Hell, Cant. 13*).

The *Ontoka* is a dangerous serpent, about six feet in length, of a grayish tint, with a green head and a big red spot, crest like, topping the same. Within sight of a certain mission is a grotto of such depth that its descent is made only under danger and with difficulty. This was formerly in years gone by, the lair of a gigantic *Ontoka*, the terror of the neighborhood. When the monster left his cavern at night in search of prey his head might be resting on the nearby hills while his tail had not yet left the grotto. If the *Ontoka* crept over the tops of the trees, through their trembling branches the wind would moan fitfully, and then the trees would surely wither and all human beings and animals that happened to be nigh would fall sick. Wherever the *Ontoka* passed death and destruction followed in his trail. About him was a spectral glare of flame as if he breathed fire into the surrounding atmosphere. (It puts one in mind of nearly identical fabulous stories of other lands.)

“See him stride
Valleys wide
Over woods
Over floods
When he treads
Mountains’ heads
Groan and shake.”
(Dean Swift.)

The *Ontokas* live in caverns near springs. Each spring indeed claims an *Ontoka* for its custodian. So it is with great fear that the savages approach their wells and that at night no woman or child would dare go alone to draw water. Every sobba or chief has his *Ontoka* or protector, who visits the emballa, or Sobba’s dwelling, at the witching hour of midnight to consult with him, and whenever a sacrifice is to be offered the *Ontoka* spends the night in the entrails of the victim. With regard to our giant *Ontoka*, the elders of the village in question, who are all under the power of the Ganga or magician, never weary of relating the wondrous feats he performed in olden times, before the coming of the missionaries: that it was these that drove him away and that if the people want him to return, they must revert to the religion of their ancestors and withdraw the children from the white man’s schools.

One afternoon, my savage carriers and myself hurried along our way to a post yet far off, where we might possibly get a place to sleep, under shelter from the torrential rains, when I fortunately spied, at some distance, a krall upon a hilltop, and I immediately resolved stopping there, for I was feverish and dreaded nothing so much as passing the night in the dripping woods. My men, however, showed strong repugnance to climb the steep side of that little native fortress but as I never discussed matters with them, I, on this occasion as upon many others, simply led the way and they followed. The hamlet in question was fortified after the manner of the Bantus, with palisades in double row, some 12 feet high, fastened together with unbreakable lianas and accessible only by a narrow causeway. We climbed in single file, crossed the intervening foss by a bridge made of two planks, and knocking at the entrance asked for hospi-

tality. Soon the gate was flung open—sideways, for it worked pendulum-wise: two heavy beams hanging from the archway, when unlocked, swung to the right or to the left.

One by one we entered and one by one we followed through the narrow maze of passages till we reached an open inclined space, offering from that height a fine view of the country around. The summit was covered with huts and nigh to the chief's I noticed a spreading fir tree, underneath which the village fetish was installed grimly, gruesomely and grotesquely. I had scarcely time to look about me when the Sobba or chief of the village appeared on the scene. With him came his retinue of grave and cautious councilors. Then a crowd of human faces, of men, women and children stared the white man curiously. The Sobba sat down upon the ground and made the usual salaam and clapped his hands, and so did his councilors. According to savage etiquette the honored guest alone was seated, and for this I used a stone as a chair. Just behind me was the hut destined to my use, which a woman was busy sweeping out. Finding myself the uncomfortable center of a lot of gazing savage eyes, I began a conversation which far surpassed in interest my most sanguine expectancy. I inquired from the Sobba about his health and that of his community, but he, the wary chief, giving great importance to my question, consulted in a whispering voice with his councilors, and, then only, gave answer to my interrogation. "The health of all," he said, "is good but we are in sorrow for the soul of a young man that was eaten up." The blacks, it must be observed, do not believe in natural death. They attribute it and all other evils to magic. Profiting of the opening the Sobba's answer gave me I continued: "What then becomes of a man's soul when he dies?" Here a conversation of some minutes ensued and then the Sobba having had the opinion of his advisers replied. "When a man dies his soul goes to the Good God." Again and again I made sure that I had well understood and had caught the right meaning of the black man's answer and then continuing on I asked, "And what does the Good God do with the soul?" The usual consultation with his ministers being over the reply was as follows:

"When a man dies his soul goes to the Good God and if the Good God is pleased He keeps the soul with Him and if He is not pleased He sends the soul away." "But tell me," said I eagerly, "Where does the soul, the Good God does not want, go?" To this the Sobba without consultation, unhesitatingly answered right off, "When the Good God doesn't want the soul, the soul comes back to the village. It is he that frightens our women and children when they go into the woods, kills our hens and pigs, and brings sickness upon us." I still put one more question. "And what do you do to keep away these spirits?" Here the Sobba pointed triumphantly to the village fetish under the shadow of the fir tree and added "He's there for that."

Surely enough, the fetish image was there, fixed to its pedestal, above the ground four feet, with one arm outstretched, poising grotesquely an azagaia (or spear), the face bedaubed with red and yellow ochres and ghostly touches of white clay. Within the sockets of the eyes were broken bits of glass, flat and expressionless. A larger piece covered the abdomen, into which the sorcerer looked when divining, as if he saw the entrails of the fetish. The limbs were distorted and the feet awry. Around the waist a filthy rag and the whole trunk of the body was pierced, porcupine like, with rusty nails, broken awls, blades of old knives, blunted chisels etc. All these had been hammered in as reminders of favours asked for from the spirit that was supposed to inhabit the fetish.

Everybody is familiar with those uncouth fetish statuettes of Bantu sculpture. They are to be seen in all museums. The idea and style suffer no variant, always the same hideously deformed, unproportioned images of the human form divine. They possess not one line of beauty and grace. They develop no curves of expression or feeling. There is nothing in them true to the original. Ages have passed and no improvement has ever been attempted and yet in the sister art of music the Bantu soul is alive to harmony. Why does he cling to the same unremitting ugliness of the fetish? It is not for him as a God nor as an idol of any sort. He renders the fetish no homage, no act of worship: he even

disregards it when he finds it of no use to him. Along with belief in the Good God the Bantu accepts the existence of the underworld and the efficaciousness of its aid to which in his helplessness and ignorance he constantly appeals. He argues within himself that the stronger the spirit that aids him, the more powerful the charm and the more irresistible the spell, the better it will be with him in life. In every emergency it is to the magician he goes. He attributes to him all power and is persuaded that by magic art the sorcerer can oblige agents from the other world to be subservient to him. All superstitions and vain observances originate in magic. Magic is the lie that exists from the beginning, it is the mimicry of religion, the mimicry of science and even of art.

I gave a great surprise one forenoon to a Ganga or sorcerer, the principal medicine man of the region: I visited him in his home. Though living in the vicinity of a mission he certainly did not expect me, for he looked quite ashamed. I caught him in the act of performing a magic dance round a sick person that had come to consult him and had brought two fowls. The magician was dancing frantically; gesticulating wildly; rattling furiously a dry gourd with noisy seeds within and beating madly the air with a wild cat's tail. He wore a pair of antelope horns as head gear; his face was frightfully streaked with paint and round his loins he wore a leopard skin. As pretext for my visit I asked him for a remedy for the toothache. His modest reply was "White man have no use for black man's remedies: Good for black man: No good for white man." I waived the remedy but pushed all the same my way into the savage museum of our Ganga. It certainly was a magician's den, a hideous collection of unexpected assortments, of unsightly and evil smelling things, without order of any kind; lovely plumage of rare birds broken and dirty, ruffled and stained; skulls of goats, antelope horns, paws of wild cats, hyenas and lions; teeth of every monster of the rivers and the forest; the eye-tooth of the leopard, very efficacious in necromancy; gazelle horns filled with charms, with bits of dead men's bones and sealed with wild bees wax; small bags containing philters;

skins of rats and snakes; misunga or dried fruit of the Baobab, poisonous powders and leaves of venomous plants wherewith to make deadly decoctions; shells, corry shells, scraps and ends of old iron, brass and copper, oily, greasy rags, all kinds of things the Ganga may pick up he puts in his museum and out of them makes gris-gris. Nothing is too repulsive for him. He knows full well that the more repugnant the amulet be the more acceptable it is to the votaries. The sorcerer pretends to possess illimited power in his craft. His charms give victory against visible and invisible enemies, by day or by night: they render invisible and invulnerable, turn aside bullets, bring the game to the hunter's traps and fish to the fisherman's hook. The Ganga can read the future in the bowels of his victims, can chase evil spirits from the body of the sick by introducing another still more powerful, that searches his entrails and scares away the enemy or he sucks him out through the wounds of the injured man: He can charm the thunderbolt, bring rain or sunshine, strike the earth with barrenness or make it fruitful in products. All this he can do in consequence of his pact with the underworld and in virtue of certain ritualistic and esoteric cabalistic signs. My Ganga was just the man to pretend to do all these wonders; he had gone through the rude preparatory puberty rites; he had been initiated in all the secrets of magic; he knew something of astronomical and meteorological phenomena; he was a shrewd crafty man, a keen observer and knew how to profit of fortuitous circumstances. It was said that he had, in times gone by, taken part in human sacrifices and that he was relentless and cruel especially towards the weak and powerless women and slaves.

Magic, with its developments, sorcery, conjuration and enchantment; by its mimicry of religion, of science and even of art; by its lying superstitions, vain observances, taboos and charms has never had any other end in view than to divide up the brotherhood of man. The uninitiated is violently deprived of his equal rights as fellow being and made subservient to the initiated. For this was witchcraft invented. And as if the dread fear of the underworld were not overwhelming enough the magician has craftily organ-

ized around his personality and his dark mysteries, the better to make his work a success and hide more surely his monstrous crimes and human sacrifices, secret societies whose members are bound together by oath and live in the certainty of a cruel death should they ever reveal anything thereto pertaining. It is the pagan way of solving the social problem: men club together in secret to crush other men! The actual savage state of the African is a proof of what magic has done for mankind.

A great deal might still be said to give a satisfactory idea of the field the missionaries of Angola work in. I will but mention two of them for neither time nor competency allow me to do more. It has many times been affirmed that the black has come down to us through ages without annals, without literature, without having constructed a temple or a tomb, and yet has he brought with him two lasting monuments, far more worthy of study and persevering analysis, that the hearsay and impressions of travelers, viz: his language and his laws. These required a legislator of the wisest, that supposes the existence at one time of a cultured people, for it is not only beautiful in construction and harmonious, it is most logical and philosophical.